

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. to 108. (Canceled)

109. (New) An information providing method of providing information to a user, comprising:

an input step of inputting a code;

a first retrieval step of searching a first database for first information corresponding to the input code and extracting the first information and its properties;

a determination step of determining a layout for printing the first information extracted in said first retrieval step on a paper sheet;

a second retrieval step of searching a second database for second information and extracting a plurality of pieces of the second information based at least in part on the properties extracted in said first retrieval step;

a preparation step of preparing a plurality of layout examples of the plurality of pieces of the second information extracted in said second retrieval step;

a selection step of selecting, from the plurality of layout examples, one layout example for printing the plurality of pieces of the second information on the paper sheet; and

a printing step of printing the first information and the plurality of pieces of the second information on the paper sheet according to the layout determined in said determination step and the layout example selected in said selection step.

110. (New) The method according to claim 109, wherein in said second retrieval step the plurality of pieces of the second information are extracted based on the properties of the first information and on properties corresponding to the second information.

111. (New) The method according to claim 109, wherein the properties of the second information include at least one of limitations on printing, term for printing, and opportunities for printing.

112. (New) The method according to claim 109, wherein the second information contains arbitrary advertisement information.

113. (New) The method according to claim 109, further comprising a setting step of setting whether the second information is to be printed or not, and wherein said second retrieval step is performed in accordance with the setting.

114. (New) The method according to claim 109, further comprising a checking step of checking whether the determined layout for printing the first information includes a margin used to arrange the first information, and wherein said second retrieval step is performed in accordance with the result of the checking step.

115. (New) A system for providing information to a user, the system comprising:

input means for inputting a code;

first retrieval means for searching a first database for first information corresponding to the input code and extracting the first information and its properties;

determination means for determining a layout for printing the first information extracted by said first retrieval means on a paper sheet;

second retrieval means for searching a second database for second information and extracting a plurality of pieces of the second information based at least in part on the properties extracted by said first retrieval means;

preparation means for preparing a plurality of layout examples of the plurality of pieces of the second information extracted by said second retrieval means;

selection means for selecting, from the plurality of layout examples, one layout example for printing the plurality of pieces of the second information on the paper sheet; and

printing means of printing the first information and the plurality of pieces of the second information on the paper sheet according to the layout determined by said determination means and the layout example selected by said selection means.

116. (New) The system according to claim 115, wherein said second retrieval means extracts the plurality of pieces of the second information based on the properties of the first information and on properties corresponding to the second

information.

117. (New) The system according to claim 115, wherein the properties of the second information comprises at least one of limitations on printing, term for printing, and opportunities for printing.

118. (New) The system according to claim 115, wherein the second information contains arbitrary advertisement information.

119. (New) The system according to claim 115, further comprising a setting means for setting whether the second information is to be printed or not, and wherein said second retrieval means performs in accordance with the setting.

120. (New) The system according to claim 115, further comprising a checking means for checking whether the determined layout for printing the first information includes a margin used to arrange the first information, and wherein said second retrieval means performs in accordance with the checking performed by said checking means.

121. (New) A computer-readable storage medium which stores computer-executable program code for providing information to a user, the program code comprising:

an input step of inputting a code;

a first retrieval step of searching a first database for first information corresponding to the input code and extracting the first information and its properties;

a determination step of determining a layout for printing the first information extracted in said first retrieval step on a paper sheet;

a second retrieval step of searching a second database for second information and extracting a plurality of pieces of the second information based at least in part on the properties extracted in said first retrieval step;

a preparation step of preparing a plurality of layout examples of the plurality of pieces of the second information extracted in said second retrieval step;

a selection step of selecting, from the plurality of layout examples, one layout example for printing the plurality of pieces of the second information on the paper sheet; and

a printing step of printing the first information and the plurality of pieces of the second information on the paper sheet according to the layout determined in said determination step and the layout example selected in said selection step.